

My name is Brian Essenter. I am a Pharmacist and resident of Monroe. I am a former Dispensary Manager in Connecticut and will be the Dispensary Manager of the new dispensary in New Haven.

I would like to testify in Opposition of SB 1085 An Act Concerning the legalization of the retail sale and possession of cannabis and concerning the erasure of criminal records in the case of convictions based on the possession of a small amount of cannabis.

I believe that this bill does not achieve nearly what its intention are. The bill still includes mandatory minimum sentences. And increased penalties for any "Black Market" activity. We need to look at all of these situations on a case by case basis. We are here because the over policing in the first place!

SB 1085 is nothing more than an attempt to increase the Decriminalization amounts to 1.5 ounces. This bill will only going to lead to more policing, persecuting, and prosecuting especially in communities that have been impacted by the war on drugs most significantly! We need to look at all of these situations on a case by case basis. We are here because the over policing in these neighborhoods in the first place!

A major miss in this bill is that it does not decriminalize Distribution/Intent to Sell or Cultivate. These are/were charges that would very typically be added on top of simple possession charges at the subjective discretion of the officers and states attorneys general when arresting and prosecuting the alleged. This was typically applied more harshly on those in areas most impacted by the war on drugs. Expungement/Erasure of cannabis related crimes, regardless of their nature, is imperative. Certainly, if we are now going to allow others to legally do so.

On a Positive note, there does seem to be language regarding public consumption lounges. Social Consumption Lounges are necessary for those who are living in Public housing, or any other facility that does not permit the use of cannabis on premises. If this is now legal for residents over 21 to consume, it is only right that they have a legal place to consume it. Otherwise again we are limiting those we are attempting to help.

If Connecticut is interested in doing this correctly, I would recommend that you speak the people who have been affected by the war on drugs. Those who we are trying to help! I would refer you to CURECT's testimony and guidance in crafting the language of this bill in order to make it something we can all be proud of.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Judiciary Committee I thank you for you time! I hope you take my points into serious consideration as this bill could have some very serious unintended impacts. If anyone has any questions please contact me.

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